Hiring of women and infants for begging

*108. DR. P.C. ALEXANDER: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a massive increase in the practice of hiring the services of women and infants by begger mafia for begging at public places in big cities of the country, particularly in Delhi; and

(b) if so, the steps being taken by Government to prevent the exploitation of women and children by the begger mafia?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY): (a) As informed by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the subject of beggary is a State subject and in the absence of relevant data/records being available in respect of beggary, it is not possible to indicate whether there has been an increase in the practice of hiring the services of women and infants by beggar mafias for begging at public places in big cities of the country.

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi [Government of NCT of Delhi] has informed that the beggar population is a floating population and keeps migrating in and out of Delhi. Hence, assessment of exact number of beggars in Delhi at any point of time is difficult. As per a survey recently carried out by the Government of NCT of Delhi in all 134 Municipal Corporation of Delhi [MCD] wards, the average figure was approximately 58,570 beggars in the NCT of Delhi.

(b) According to the information given by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, a Central Sector Scheme had been formulated in 1992-93, with the aim of providing facilities for the technical education and vocational training of beggars, engaging beggars in productive work so as to facilitate their reintegration into society and also involving voluntary welfare organizations. However, the scheme has been discontinued from 1998-99 in view of rather moderate demand from the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations. Presently, that Ministry is not implementing any scheme for curbing beggary or for welfare of beggars.

As per the information received from the Government of NCT of Delhi, regular enforcement action is carried out under the provisions of Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 as extended to Delhi to curb the practice of begging as a whole.

Development policy for linguistic minorities

*109. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be please to State:

(a) whether Government are formulating linguistic minorities and their development policy;

(b) if so, the salient features thereof, State-wise and Union Territory-wise; and

(c) the protection and development policies formulated for Tamil minorities in Delhi and other northern States?